



15 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Ash Wednesday

1. What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and repentance leading up to Easter. It is a solemn day of reflection on our mortality and the need for spiritual renewal.

2. Why do Catholics receive ashes on Ash Wednesday?

The ashes symbolize repentance, humility, and the reality that life on earth is temporary. They serve as a public sign of faith and a reminder to turn away from sin and follow the Gospel.

3. Where do the ashes come from?

The ashes used on Ash Wednesday come from the burned palm branches of the previous year's Palm Sunday celebration. These ashes are then blessed by a priest before being distributed.

4. What do the words spoken when receiving ashes mean?

When placing ashes on the forehead, the priest may say:

- "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19)
- "Repent, and believe in the Gospel." (Mark 1:15)
- These words remind us of our mortality and the call to repentance.
-

5. Is Ash Wednesday a Holy Day of Obligation?

No, Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation, but Catholics are encouraged to attend Mass and receive ashes as a sign of their commitment to Lent.